REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 2, 2005. Claims 1-15 remain pending in this application. Claims 1, 13, and 14, the independent claims, have been amended to define more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-5, 7, and 10-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious from U.S. Patent 6,057,884 to Chen et al. in view of U.S. Patent 5,448,369 to Lee et al. and U.S. Patent 6,584,275 to Blatter; and Claims 6, 8, and 9, as being obvious from Chen et al., Lee et al., and Blatter, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,295,380 to Takahashi.

Claim 1 is directed to a decoding apparatus including an input unit, a separation unit, a judgment unit, a selection unit, an outputting unit, and a synthesis unit. The input unit is arranged to input a bitstream obtained by coding a plurality of object data in units of objects and multiplexing the coded data, wherein the plurality of object data are data which provide a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data. The separation unit is adapted to separate coded data of each object from the bitstream, and the judgment unit is adapted to judge permission of reproduction of the coded data by using intellectual property and management protection data included in the bitstream. The selection unit is adapted to select predetermined object data from among the plurality of object data according to a judgment result obtained by the judgment unit and the level of reproduction-permitted scalability. The outputting unit is adapted to decode the coded data of the selected object data, and output the decoded data. The synthesis unit is adapted to synthesize the object data outputted by the outputting unit.

Among other notable features of Claim 1 are inputting a plurality of object data which provide a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data, judging the permission of reproduction of separated coded data by using intellectual property and management protection data, selecting predetermined object data from among the plurality of object data according to a judgment result and the level of reproduction-permitted scalability, and outputting the decoded data of the selected object data. By virtue of the features of Claim 1, it is possible to achieve control concerning the reproduction permission as to whether or not to reproduce the data according to the judgment result and the level of the reproduction-permitted scalability, and it is also possible to easily achieve the multi-step permitted reproduction control of a viewing or listening level (e.g., providing high quality video to a user). In addition, scalability can be achieved by selecting and outputting the predetermined object data from among the plurality of object data providing the desired scalability in accordance with the combination thereof, whereby it is also possible to easily achieve the multi-step reproduction control.

Chen et al., as understood by Applicant, relates to temporal and spatial scalable coding for video object planes. Chen et al. apparently discusses that multiplexed coded data is divided into enhancement layer data and base layer data, and the divided data is decoded and synthesized. Moreover, Chen et al. apparently discusses that the process for achieving scalability is executed by the microprocessor and the scalability processor. For this reason, it is apparently impossible in Chen et al. to achieve the multi-step reproduction control achieved by the apparatus of Claim 1. Nothing in Chen et al. would teach or suggest (1) inputting a plurality of object data which provide a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data, (2) judging the

permission of reproduction of separated coded data by using intellectual property and management protection data, (3) selecting predetermined object data from among the plurality of object data according to a judgment result and the level of reproduction-permitted scalability, and (4) outputting the decoded data of the selected object data, as recited in Claim 1.

Lee et al., as understood by Applicant, relates to a high definition video cassette recorder (VCR) which selects a video signal characteristic to be transmitted depending on characteristics of the tape and channel. Lee et al. merely discusses that data is adjusted according to a selected recording mode, the adjusted data is recorded on the tape, and the recorded data is again adjusted and output. Lee et al. fails to teach or suggest that scalability is achieved by selecting and outputting predetermined object data from among the plurality of object data providing a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data, as recited in Claim 1.

Blatter, as understood by Applicant, relates to control of consumer recording equipment, but cannot achieve the multi-step reproduction control.

Nothing in Chen et al., Lee et al., or Blatter et al., whether considered either separately or in any permissible combination (if any) would teach or suggest (1) inputting a plurality of object data which provide a desired scalability in accordance with a combination among the plurality of object data, (2) judging the permission of reproduction of separated coded data by using intellectual property and management protection data, (3) selecting predetermined object data from among the plurality of object data according to a judgment result and the level of reproduction-permitted scalability, and (4) outputting the decoded data of the selected object data, as recited in Claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Claim 1 is believed to be clearly allowable over Chen et al., Lee et al., and Blatter et al., whether considered either separately or in any permissible combination (if any).

Independent Claims 13 and 14 are method and computer-readable storage medium claims, respectively, corresponding to apparatus Claim 1, and are believed to be patentable over Chen et al., Lee et al., and Blatter et al. for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 1.

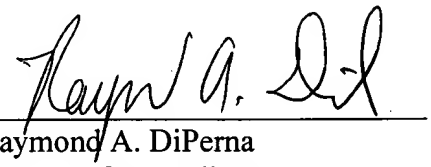
A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicant's opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as references against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from Claim 1 discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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